

ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE

In accordance with the principles of the present invention, unwanted calls may be prevented. In particular, information about a particular destination is stored in a registry at a clearinghouse server located within a network, e.g., the public telephone network.

- 5 When a call is being made to the destination, it is routed to the clearinghouse server. Identifying information such as caller-id data is retrieved and the registry is searched. If the caller is registered as being approved, the call is forwarded with information indicating that the call is "approved". If the caller is not registered or is unknown, the call is forwarded with information indicating that call is "unregistered" or "unavailable". A
- 10 user at the destination is then able to quickly determine if the call is unwanted. Alternatively, a user may be compensated for answering calls from an "unregistered" caller, thereby encouraging businesses to focus their telemarketing efforts by imposing a cost on them for unsolicited phone calls and providing compensation to users accepting calls from unregistered callers.

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